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## **Review of *Women and Sustainable Agriculture: Interviews with 14 Agents of Change* by Anna Anderson**

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**Women and Sustainable Agriculture: Interviews with 14 Agents of Change.** By Anna Anderson. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2004. ix + 210 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 paper.

It is important to say early and often that *Women and Sustainable Agriculture* is a compilation of interviews and oral histories written by and for people involved in sustainable agriculture. Anderson offers an engaging, well-written preface, but the book as a whole could perhaps be classified as more testimony than research, straying into political and social agendas that will hold great appeal for some readers and be deemed biased and controversial by others.

Following her introduction, Anderson arranges her interviews into four categories: “Traditional Agriculture,” “Pioneering Agriculture,” “Industrial Agriculture,” and “Sustainable Agriculture.” The introduction sets the tone for the interviews, making it clear that instead of providing an overview of the role women play in agricultural change, Anderson intends to offer a more focused compilation of women’s views on the importance of sustainable agriculture.

In part 1, Cornelia Butler Flora, a sociologist and scholar with the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, discusses the role women have traditionally played in agriculture. Lynn Coody, a well-respected expert in organic agriculture, discusses her involvement with organic labeling. La Rhea Pepper shares her experience in founding and growing an organic cotton enterprise.

In the second section, Dana Jackson, co-founder of The Land Institute, discusses land stewardship; Patricia Richardson explains her interest and involvement in holistic management, particularly in respect to range management; and Peggy Sechrist, a former employee of large agricultural corporations, describes what led her to work as a consultant on holistic resource management.

If examining the book solely for its emphasis on change, readers will perhaps find in part 3 the most appropriate interviews, featuring Sarah Vogel, a North Dakota attorney who has taken part in many landmark agricultural legal battles, Mona Lee Brock, one of the original members of the National Farm Crisis Center, and Kim Leval, a policy analyst who has worked on national legislation.

The final section’s interviews focus on markets and the process of bridging the gap between producer and consumer.

Many of the women featured here have done important work and led fascinating lives. Agriculture needs books, articles, and exposure for the women who are playing vital roles in the industry. But while Anderson has certainly located an interesting group of women, in many instances the work comes off as one-sided and in some cases strays from the interviewees’ areas of expertise into hot-button topics that, for many readers, will diminish the project’s impact. **Sarah Fogleman**, *Research and Extension*, *Kansas State University*.